

16. (Amended) An apparatus as defined in claim 10 wherein said rupturable closure member has a third portion encircling said second portion and further including a connection between said third portion and said container.

18. (Twice Amended) An apparatus for helping to protect an occupant of a vehicle that has a side structure, said apparatus comprising:

an inflatable vehicle occupant protection device that is inflatable into a position between the side structure of the vehicle and a vehicle occupant; and

an inflator for providing inflation fluid for inflating said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device and for maintaining said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device in an inflated condition for at least seven seconds, said inflation fluid for inflating said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device and for maintaining said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device in an inflated condition for at least seven seconds consisting essentially of an inflation fluid stored under pressure, said inflation fluid for inflating said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device and for maintaining said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device in an inflated condition for at least seven seconds consisting essentially of helium.

Please add new claims 32-36 as follows:

32. Apparatus as defined in claim 8, wherein said connection between said third portion and said container comprises a weld connection.

33. Apparatus as defined in claim 16, wherein said connection between said third portion and said container comprises a weld connection.

34. Apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein said support includes a side wall having an inner surface defining said chamber and an opposite outer surface, said inflation fluid flowing around said support adjacent said outer surface and through said outlet passage when said closure member is ruptured.

35. Apparatus as defined in claim 10, wherein said support includes a side wall having an inner surface defining said chamber and an opposite outer surface, said inflation fluid flowing around said support adjacent said outer surface and through said outlet passage when said closure member is ruptured.

36. An apparatus for providing inflation fluid to inflate an inflatable vehicle occupant protection device, said apparatus comprising:

a container storing inflation fluid under pressure, said container having an outlet passage through which inflation fluid flows from said container;

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a rupturable closure member fixed to said container and blocking flow of inflation fluid through said passage;

a support for said rupturable closure member defining a chamber adjacent said rupturable closure member, said rupturable closure member having a first portion deformed into said chamber by the pressure of the inflation fluid and a second ring-shaped portion encircling said first portion outside of said chamber, said first and second portions having a substantially flat configuration prior to said inflation fluid being introduced into said container; and

an initiator which, when actuated, ruptures said closure member.